

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

In the following claims, which include all the claims in this application, claims 1 and 14 are amended and new claims 15 through 17 are added.

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1. (currently amended) An actuator for actuating an automatic clutch or an automatic transmission, said actuator comprising: a housing that includes an axially-extending first receptacle for ~~a toothed rack~~ slidably receiving a toothed rack, and received within the first receptacle for linear movement along a rack longitudinal axis; a second receptacle adjacent to the first receptacle and within which second receptacle a gear is rotatably carried, wherein the gear is in meshing engagement with the toothed rack ; for linearly moving the toothed rack within the first receptacle; and an electric motor drivingly connected with the gear, wherein the electric motor and the gear are provided as a pre-assembled unit ~~and are~~ that is removably connected with the housing.

2. (original) An actuator as claimed in claim 1, wherein the toothed rack is substantially cylindrical, and the first receptacle is substantially a hollow cylinder.

3. (original) An actuator as claimed in claim 1, including an energy accumulator positioned between and in contact with the toothed rack and the housing, and wherein the toothed rack is movable in a first direction of movement

that is opposite to a force imposed on the toothed rack by the energy accumulator, and is movable in a second direction by the force of the energy accumulator.

4. (original) An actuator as claimed in claim 3 wherein the energy accumulator contacts the toothed rack at a first protrusion extending outwardly from the toothed rack.

5. (original) An actuator as claimed in claim 4, wherein the first protrusion is a protruding ring.

6. (original) An actuator as claimed in claim 4, wherein the first protrusion is integrally formed with the toothed rack.

7. (original) An actuator as claimed in claim 3, wherein the energy accumulator contacts the housing at an inwardly-extending second protrusion within the housing.

8. (original) An actuator as claimed in claim 7, wherein the second protrusion is a protruding ring.

9. (original) An actuator as claimed in claim 7, wherein the second protrusion is integrally formed with the housing.

10. (original) An actuator as claimed in claim 4, wherein the first protrusion is connected by one of an interlocking, a frictional locking, a force locking, or a material locking connection¹.

11. (original) An actuator as claimed in claim 1, wherein the toothed rack is axially slidably received within the first receptacle.

12. (original) An actuator as claimed in claim 1, wherein the toothed rack is supported in bearings carried adjacent end areas of the first receptacle.

13. (original) An actuator as claimed in claim 12, wherein the bearings are journal bearings that are carried by the first receptacle.

14. (currently amended) An actuator as claimed in claim 13, wherein one of the journal bearing bearings defines a stop for the an energy accumulator within the housing.

15. (new) An actuator as claimed in claim 1, wherein the electric motor includes a rotatable drive shaft that has a longitudinal axis that is substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the toothed rack.

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16. (new) An actuator as claimed in claim 1, wherein the gear is a spur gear.

17. (new) An actuator as claimed in claim 1, including a transmission operatively connected between the electric motor and the gear for transmitting rotational movement between the motor and the gear.
